Damage to apple crop in Himachal Pradesh

1699. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the unfavourable weather conditions over the past one year in Himachal Pradesh have taken a heavy toll of the apple crop with the total production declined by over 45 per cent as compared to the last year due to which apple growers have been put in a heavy debt and forced to leave apple farming;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government has formulated any scheme for apple growers to tackle such natural calamities;

(d) if so, the salient features of the scheme; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir. The production of apple has reduced from 510161 MT during 2007-08 to 279759 MT, with a total decline in production by 45.16% *i.e.* 230402 MT as compared to the last year due to unfavorable weather conditions over past one year in Himachal Pradesh. However, the apple growers are not leaving apple farming in Himachal Pradesh due to rise in prices of Apple which has compensated the growers for loss in fruit production.

(b) The Government of Himachal Pradesh is encouraging the growers to adopt cultivation of new improved strains recently imported by the Department, which are less sensitive to adverse climatic conditions during flowering and fruiting as compared to delicious group of Apple.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The Government of Himachal Pradesh has implemented Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme for Apple from Rabi 2009-10 season on pilot basis covering adverse climatic conditions affecting apple production such as chilling requirement, temperature fluctuation, rainfall requirement and unseasonal/excess rainfall for which a total premium 50% (@11.5% + 10.30% ST) of the sum insured per tree shall be payable by the growers. The balance 50% amount of premium shall be borne by Central and State Govt. on equal share basis. Besides, Government of India has approved a sum of Rs.88.93 crores for release from National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF), including Rs.11.82 crores for input subsidy to Horticulture farmers of the State.

(e) Does not arise.

Benefit under NAIS to apple growers in Himachal Pradesh

1700. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of farmers benefited under the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) in the country including Himachal Pradesh during last three years, year-wise;

(b) the targets fixed and achieved thereunder during the Tenth Five Year Plan, State-wise;

(c) whether apple growers of Himachal Pradesh have not been able to reap the benefits of NAIS;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether Government has taken steps to ensure that the benefit of the above scheme reaches the apple growers; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) is a demand driven scheme, therefore, no targets are fixed under the scheme. State-wise details of total number of farmers covered under the scheme in the country including that of Himachal Pradesh, during last three years, is given in Statement (*See* below).

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Plantation/perennial horticultural crops like apple are not covered under the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) due to their peculiar nature and non-availability of past yield data. The scheme covers only food crops, oilseeds, pulses and annual commercial/horticultural crops for which yield data is available for a requisite number of years.

(e) and (f) Keeping in view the suggestions of States/UTs and other stake-holders, a Joint Group was constituted by the Government, to study the improvements required in the existing crop insurance schemes. The Group has reviewed the scheme and made important recommendations including insurance coverage for perennial horticultural and vegetable crops as a separate scheme. These crops can be covered under Pilot Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (WBCIS), introduced in consultation with implementing insurance companies and respective State Governments. Accordingly, Government of Himachal Pradesh has decided to implement Pilot WBCIS to cover Apple crop during Rabi 2009-10 season in Theog, Jubbal, Narkanada, Rohru and Chirgaon blocks of Shimla district and Ani Block of Kullu district.

Statement

Farmers covered from 2006-07 to 2008-09

S.No.	State	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2270274	2333702	2147028	6751004
2.	Assam	14618	19609	35817	70044
3.	Bihar	684435	913018	766556	2364009
4.	Chhattisgarh	729320	708590	828297	2266207

1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Goa	544	513	393	1450
6.	Gujarat	877882	839273	841630	2558785
7.	Haryana	98743	140741	1788	241272
8.	Himachal Pradesh	19272	13228	22293	54793
9.	Jharkhand	1262681	742089	742837	2747607
10.	Karnataka	1340337	636976	1341946	3319259
11.	Kerala	30212	33961	27945	92118
12.	Madhya Pradesh	1859108	2215524	1844470	5919102
13.	Maharashtra	1676064	1984301	3502614	7162979
14.	Meghalaya	3102	1319	3225	7646
15.	Mizoram	0	0	0	0
16.	Orissa	1080217	973145	773197	2826559
17.	Rajasthan	2619180	2834649	2250722	7704551
18.	Sikkim	38	23	314	375
19.	Tamil Nadu	315401	557200	820159	1692760
20.	Tripura	2472	1889	4118	8479
21.	Uttar Pradesh	1998002	2397911	2183557	6579470
22.	Uttarakhand	20135	33293	53741	107169
23.	West Bengal	1001321	1052765	957052	3011138
24.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	78	176	198	452
25.	Puducherry	2824	2670	1562	7056
26.	Jammu and Kashmir	5770	6012	1764	13546
	TOTAL	17912030	18442577	19153223	55507830

Water crisis in agriculture sector

1701. SHRI KHEKIHO ZHIMOMI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has initiated any action plan to cope with deficiency in water, which has threatened to affect the Rabi crop;